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Production of Copper in 1909.

A RECORD BREAKING YEAR.

Statistics and estimates received by the United States Geological Survey from all plants known to produce blister copper from domestic ores and from all lake mines indicate that the copper output from mines in the United States in 1909 surpassed all previous records.

The figures, which have been collected by B. S. Butler, of the Survey, represent the actual production of each company for eleven months and include an estimate of its December output. The November figures for a few companies were not available and these companies furnished estimates for the last two months of the year. According to the statistics and estimates received the output of blister and lake copper was 1,117,830,000 pounds, as against 942,570,721 pounds in 1908, an increase of over 18 per cent. This not only exceeds the increase of any previous year but it is considerably greater than the total yearly increase since 1904.

OUTPUT OF LEADING COPPER-PRODUCING STATES.

It is impossible now to give figures that represent accurately the distribution of the output among the States of origin, but a few general statements may be positively made concerning the leading copper-producing States. Montana shows a large increase, again taking first rank, a place lost to Arizona in 1907. The production in Montana will nearly equal or will possibly exceed the State's previous record output, 314,770,000 pounds, made in 1905. Arizona holds second place, with a slight increase over the 289,523,000 pounds produced in 1908. Michigan also exceeded the 1908 production, 222,289,000 pounds. Large gains were made by Utah and Nevada, and California also increased its output considerably.

REFINED COPPER.

Statistics showing the output of refine copper by plants in the United States are not now collected by the Geological Survey. Figures published by the Copper Producers' Association indicate that the production of marketable copper from all sources, domestic and foreign, for the first eleven months of 1909 will exceed 1,490,000,000, as against 1,161,176,085 pounds in 1908. Statistics showing domestic deliveries for the first eleven months of the year, as given by the Copper Producers' Association, indicate a consumption of copper in the United States considerably greater than the previous record consumption—685,000,000 pounds, in 1906.

EXPORTS.

Estimates based on figures for the first eleven months, published by the Bureau of Statistics and also by the Copper Producers' Association, indicate that the exports of copper will surpass by several million pounds the exports for 1908—661,876,127 pounds.

IMPORTS.

According to the Bureau of Statistics, imports of pigs, bars, ingots, plates, and old copper for the first eleven months amounted to 213,100,281 pounds, and the copper content of ore matte and regulus imported amounted to 74,708,482 pounds. If the imports for December were equal to the average monthly import for the first eleven months the amount of copper entering the United States for the year was about 311,800,000 pounds, as against 218,705,487 pounds in 1908.

STOCKS.

Stocks of refined copper in the United States show a considerable increase over those of January 1, 1909, but the accumulation occured for the most part during the first half of the year. European stocks, however, have increased rather uniformly throughout the year and at the close were probably nearly double those of January 1, 1909. The price of copper has remained close to 13 cents throughout the year, the average monthly New York quotation for electrolytic copper being a little under 13 cents.

MINE DEVELOPMENT.

Mine development has been active in most of the important camps, but especially so in the deposits of disseminated ore in Arizona and Nevada. The mines and the smelters of the country are now in a position to make the output of 1910 larger than that of 1909. So many factors, however, enter into the determination of the output that any forecast of production of the coming year made at this time would be without value.

The Bingham-Ely Combine.

In speaking of the proposed consolidation, or merger, of the Utah Copper and Boston Consolidated, of Bingham, Utah, and the Nevada Consolidated, of Ely, Nevada, the Denver Daily Mining Record says:

It seems a little remarkable that a transaction so large as the merger of the Utah Copper, Boston Consolidated and Nevada Consolidated companies, potentially capable of producing 250,000,000 pounds of copper per annum and representing a value of 125,000,000 at the present time, should attract so little attention from the general press of the country. Even the larger merger of copper producers, which has been discussed of late with no definite outcome as yet, has not received much notice from the general dailies, notwithstanding it promises to become one of the three largest corporations in the world.

The Bingham-Ely merger is virtually an accomplished fact, for it has received confirmation from official sources. The basis of the union has even been intimated, and the figures are well worth nothing. Taking Utah Copper as the ground upon which the reorganized concern will be built, it will be recalled that its capital is 750,000 shrres, partly held for the conversion of bonds. The Boston Consolidated's capital liabilities are approximately represented by its 775,000 shares. Therefore the merger of these two on a basis of two and a half shares of Boston for one of Utah give an insight into what is considered the relative worth of these two Bingham enterprises. To begin with Boston Consolidated is not so fully equipped as its neighbor, and is perhaps not so well situated financially. It would require an expenditure of several millions, perhaps, to bring it up to the stage of productivity possessed by the other. Moreover, its ore resources will probably not prove to be more than one-half as great as those of the Utah Copper company, although they are of similar character and merge into each other. The real basis of exchange evidently rests upon the question of ore resources, which is the main thing in any mining enterprise.

The speculators are not so certain of the basis of union between the Nevada Consolidated of Ely and the Bingham enterprises. Nevada Consolidated has an authorized issue of 2,000,000 shares, which will provide for the absorption of Cumberland-Ely, already effected, and the conversion of bonds. Practically all of this stock will be outstanding, if not now. Therefore, on a share basis, the Nevada Consolidated stands in a relationship to Utah Copper of about eight to three, so that, if they were to join on an equality, two and two-thirds shares of Nevada Consolidated would be turned in for one share of Utah Copper. It would appear, however, that they are talking of two or two and a half for one, which seems to indicate an intention to regard Nevada Consolidated as the superior. On a basis of ore resources, this is not true, but the costs of producing copper appear to be materially lower at the Ely mine, made possible, to some extent, by the offsets which the company receives from its railroad operations. Moreover, this company is the owner of the smelter which treats its ores and its transportation costs are low. The grade of its ore also averages higher.

There is no economic advantage in the union of the Ely and Bingham enterprises, unless it be in the consolidation of control of the output. In the case of Boston Consolidated and Utah Copper together, there is, however, a decided cause for the union. They are naturally one property, and the separate operation of them is an economic waste. Both will undoubtedly be more valuable under one ownership.—Salt Lake Mining Review.

Dredging.

Dredging has of late years secured for itself a substantial place amongst mining operations. Beginning in New Zealand and carried on there with varying success for several years it later took root in California. With improved machinery and great success recently the dredges have invaded Colorado. At Breckenridge, Summit county, various devices apart from the common hydraulics were tried to win the placer gold from areas inaccessible to the average placer miner, such as the wide flat meadow bottoms of rivers. For some years the Evans elevator tried to solve the problem of extracting gold from bedrock under its heavy cover of some 60 feet or more of large boulders and gravel, but its efforts were unsuccessful, and the reign of elevators, including a curious clamshell digger, has passed, leaving only monuments of unsuccessful work and skeletons of machinery of various kinds and patterns. The reign of elevators has succeeded to that of dredges. At first a few small boats of the Risdon pattern were tried, but proved too slight to compete with the large boulders. They were followed by much larger ships of the Bucyrus type, with the most powerful up-to-date machinery, and these have proved themselves at last a complete success. One has but to go by train down the valley of the Blue River or to ride a mile or two up French and other tributary gulches to see the vast amount of work already accomplished. Miles of steep banks of boulders are arranged along the valley like glacial moraines, and at different points the great machines are seen at work, digging their way down to bedrock and progressing steadily along the valley and river courses. A great and unexpected event has been the discovery that the dredges, as now organized, can work through the greater part of the winter season instead of their operations being restricted to but a few months in the year. This is a vast improvement on the average hydraulicking methods whose working time was limited to the short period when the river was open; when winter and freezing began work of necessity stopped.—Denver Mining Science.

Source of Wealth a Mystery.

Probably the most peculiar placer deposit ever found in Montana was discovered in the Scratch Gravel hills, four miles north of Helena, says the Helena Independent.

The find was made by E. R. Tandy more than 40 years ago, and the ground was worked out by him. The placers consisted of shallow granite sand covering a bedrock of granite, and was not more than two feet in thickness. The method adopted for working the ground was quite simple, but very effective. A ditch from Seven Mile creek was dug and water turned into it, which flowed by gravity to the diggings. An ordinary plow was then used to plow up the diggings, sluices set and the waste material washed away. The gold found after the dirt was washed off consisted of nuggets, which were mostly picked by hand from the bedrock. A large percentage of the gold was coated with a white silicate of lime, and resembled ordinary worthless pebbles, but when the coating was removed from the nuggets they proved to be the pure stuff.

Many attempts have been made to account for the presence of the gold in a locality where there was practically no wash, but thus far no satisfactory solution has been submitted, unless it be that the gold came from a pocket or lead near by and a little higher up. But whatever is the true solution of the rich Tandy diggings nobody has as yet traced the gold to its source, but it is generally conceded by those familiar with the history of the camp that the finder will meet with a rich reward.

Treasure Isle Proves a Myth.

A Nogales dispatch says:—The mystery and glamor for many years surrounding Tiburon Island, Gulf of California, has been effectively dissipated by the return of seven of the American explorers who had passed through Nogales on October 18 on their way to explore the island, which they supposed to be inhabited by man-eating Seri Indians and to contain hidden treasure and rich mineral veins. The party was under the leadership of Prof. Fayette A. Jones.

At Guaymas the explorers bought a boat, provisioned it for a three-months' stay and sailed up the gulf, landing at Keno bay on the mainland.

Here he was visited by 20 Seris, men and women, who proved friendly and who informed them that there was nothing of value on the island.

They crossed to the island, established a permanent camp and prosecuted their explorations for five weeks, finding no indication of value or of great interest.

The island is 20 miles wide and 35 miles long and is of volcanic origin. Good grass abounds and there is some running water. It contains no human being, but hundreds of deer and myriads of wild pigeons.

Inscriptions were found proving the visit there in 1935 of a rescue party in search of traces of the Grindell exploring expedition, lost the year before.

During the party's stay it was visited by former Congressman Conn of Indiana, who is making a pleasure cruise in his private yacht "Comfort."

The party received every help and courtesy at the hands of the Mexican officials. It came away thoroughly satisfied that the mystery and romance attached to Tiburon are all a myth.

Fine Results From Milling.

The late run of Chief of the Hills ore through the Cyrus Noble mill proved to be an exceptionally fine ore. Forty-six and a fraction tons went into the hoppers and the clean-up gave 200 ounces of gold, the saving being between 85 and 90 per cent. Yesterday the fineness of the gold had not been determined, but it is estimated to be worth at least 12.50$ an ounce, making the brick worth roundly 2500$ and giving the ore an average of better than 50$ to the ton.

Messrs. Frank Horne, Geo. Weeks, Robt. Ray and C. E. Niles are the fortunate leasers. Succeeding J. A. Delameter, these gentlemen went to work sinking a new shaft near the portal of the middle tunnel. This they put down to a depth of 30 feet and then stoped to within ten feet of the surface.

The leasers figure that they have somewhere between 50 and 100 tons remaining in sight, which will at once be extracted. The future scheme of development calls for the running in of the lower tunnel and the sinking of the shaft until connections are made. The objective point is the junction of the two separate veins which are pitching toward one another.

The leasers are loud in their praises of Messrs. Thompson and Woodman, of the Cyrus Noble, for their careful and very successful handling of the run.—Bulletin.

Boston Ely Ore Rich.

An Ely dispatch says:—The body of sulphide ore in the bottom of the Boston Ely shaft, which was expected to contain small copper values, has been found to carry approximately 11 per cent copper, it is said. This is a distinct surprise, for it was believed that enrichment would not occur until water level was reached; what appeared to be copper in the ore was believed, until assays were taken, to be iron. The ore is known to carry some gold and silver values, as well as copper, but at last account no test had been made for the precious metal contents.

The ore was encountered at the depth of 1,060 feet, and at seven feet furthur depth the bottom of the shaft was entirely in ore, with every indication that the body is a large one. The high values carried by the ore at that horizon is regarded as assuring that the Boston Ely is to be a rich mine; that the ore of the district in the lime formation is high grade, thus offsetting the lower cost of production by the mines of the prophyry belt.

Advices from the Mendha mine in the Highland district indicate that conditions there are highly gratifying to the officers and shareholders of that corporation. South of the main fissure on the 800 level, Manager John R. Cook has driven for more than 20 feet through a body of high grade ore containing average values of 100 ounces in silver, 50 per cent lead and 25$ in gold; while on the 950 level has been exposed a five-foot breast, in a bedded vein, which returns assays of 40 per cent lead, 25 ounces in silver and 15$ in gold. The north 800 cross-cut has been run out 140 feet with conditions ripe for the interception of another fissure.—Pioche Record.